

A LETTER to a Friend, advising in this extraordinary *Juncture, how to free the Nation from SLAVERY* for ever.

I Doubt not but the Wisdom of the Nation will take the most effectual way to secure our Religion, our Liberties, and Property. However, being a Lover of all these, I can't forbear communicating my Thoughts unto you with an assurance you'll consider them.

God hath done great things for us, and yet the greatest thing is not yet done. There are many difficulties in the way, and many more will be thrown into it. Slavery is most to be dreaded at this time: What is done must be chiefly to guard against it. How to do it is the principal business of the great Men in the next Convention. To know where we are is the first step to be taken: Is the Government dissolved, or only under some Disorders? If the latter, Are the Disorders such as must be laid to the charge of the King, or to his Ministers, or both? If to the King, Are they sufficient to depose him? If that be done, Are we more secure from Slavery than now? Will there be more than a change of Persons in the Throne? A Child for a Father, a Protestant for a Papist? And in a few years the Succession may fall to the Queen of Spain, or Dutchess of Savoy, both Roman Catholics, and we in as great, or greater danger of Popery and Slavery than we were the other day; the Constitution remains the same, the *Jura Majestatis*, viz. the *Astutia*; the Power to make War or Peace; the choosing Judges, Sheriffs, &c. still in the Person of the King; or if only by one Parliament restored to the People, another Parliament may give them the King again. *Leges Posteriores priores abrogant.* And who can tell what Contests there may be about the Right of the Crown. The deposed Prince is alive, and his Right by Sword will be disputed, &c.

If the Government be dissolved, the Power devolves on the People; no one can claim the Crown; the Royal Family is as it were extinct; the People may set up what Government they please, either the old or a new. A Monarchy absolute, or limited; or an Aristocracy or Democracy. If a Monarchy limited, supposing it mostly suited to the temper of the English, they may choose what Family they please to sit in the Throne: They may settle it on the Princess of Orange, Princess Ann, the Prince of Orange, and for want of Issue, on whom else they think meet. These hold not by virtue of an old right, but by reason of the people's placing it upon 'em, and the Monarchy may be thus *De Novo* made Hereditary, and the King and Prince of Wales gone, having lost their Right by the Dissolution of the Government. The *Jura Majestatis*, the *Militia*, the Power of War and Peace, or the Power of the Sword, with the Power of making Judges, Sheriffs, &c. may be lodged where now the Power of Legislation is, viz. in King, Lords, and Commons, which will necessitate frequent Parliaments, and make it impossible for the Monarch to enslave us. There are but two ways by which Slavery can be brought on us, viz. Force, or Injustice. The *Militia*, or Power of the Sword being in the People, we are secured from the mischief of Force. The Power of making Judges and all the Ministers of Justice being also in the People, they cannot be ruin'd by Injustice.

But we must do no Evil, that Good may come of it. Is our Government dissolved, or is it not? If there be a Dissolution, Is it of the Constitution, or only of the Form of Administration? I confess my self not Statesman enough to be acquainted with the Fineness of Politicks, but am apt to run the old Road, and please my self with an old distinction, All Power is Originally, or Fundamentally in the People. Formally in the Parliament; which is one Cooperation made up of three Constituent-Essentiating Parts, King, Lords and Commons, so it was with us in England. When this Cooperation is broken, when any one Essentiating Part is lost or gone, there is a Dissolution of the Cooperation. The Formal Seat of Power, and that Power devolves on the People. When

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When it's impossible to have a Parliament, the Power returns to them with whom it was originally. Is it possible to have a *Parliament*? It's not possible. The Government therefore is dissolv'd.

If what is essential to our Constitution be invaded or ravish'd from us, the Constitution is broken. I will instance in two things essential to the Constitution. That the People choose their own *Representatives*. And that their *Representatives* have such an Interest in the *Legislation*, that no Laws be made or abrogated without their Consent. The destroying one or both of these, subverts the Foundation of our Government: The Prince's assuming to himself the Power of electing Parliament-Men, or his exercising the *Legislative* Power, though under the name of the Dispensing Power, is a destroying those Rights of the People that are essential to our Constitution, and a dissolving it.

The Government being dissolved, what must the People do? Care must be taken that the Government to be erected be such as will perfectly secure us from *Slavery*; and be a Fence inviolable to the *Liberty* and *Property* of the People: And the Rights of Majesty must be therefore lodged with the *Parliament*; this will be grateful to the People. The way of doing it must be *Great*, *Awful*, and *August*, that none may be able to quarrel it. A National Convention made up of the *Representatives* of the Community: That the Convention may be truly National, and represent the Community, it must be larger than a House of Commons ordinarily is. It's this Convention that sets up what kind of Government they please. If they'll have a Parliament made up of King, Lords and Commons, it's sufficient that this Convention is so pleased. The Power of this Convention must be absolute and uncontrollable, accountable to none but God. It gives Laws to Kings, yea to the whole Parliament, and sets bounds unto it; it shall go so far, and no farther. No Act of Parliament can be strong enough to move the Foundation laid by this Convention. The Convention therefore as it has more Power than a *Parliament*, and is it's *Creator*, it must have a larger Body. What think you therefore if the first thing done by the approaching Convention be the increasing their Number. What if they double it? Whether by ordering every Market-Town to send up their Representatives, Or every Hundred, Wapentake, &c. or by some other way, according to the proportion of People, and public payments; as the Wise Men of this Convention shall judge most practicable, that it may be the *Grand Council* of the Nation. I have unburdened my self, and am

Jan. 5.
1688.

Your humble Servant.